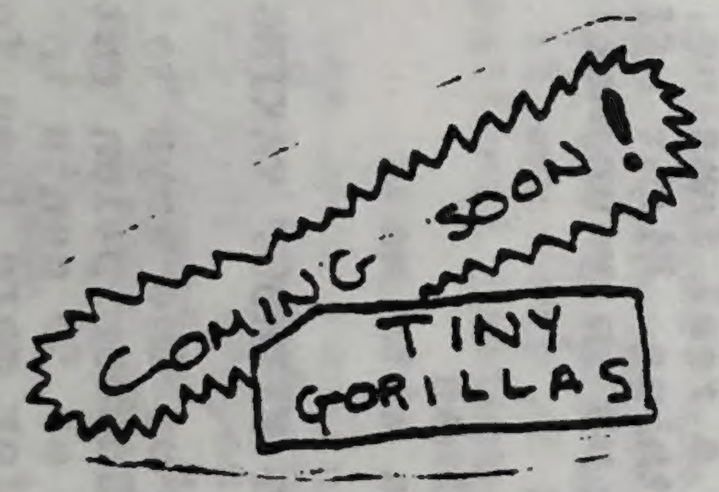
WARNING: This package contains an issue of FACTSHEET FIVE, a work which contains amounts of guerilla ontology possibly exceeding both Federal Standards and the bounds of Good Taste.



FACTSHEET FIVE

another edition of the zine of crosspollination and cross-currents, from the finally-thawed fingers of Mike Gunderloy, eagarly greeting the Spring at Superlative Manor, aka BBBTLE, 41 Lawrence St., Medf(n)ord, MA, 02155; pjone (617)-391-3496. This is Pretzel Press publication #413, and is itnended for direct mailing to the Good Folks, and maybe for an apa or two. Frequency: Irregular, but it gets more quarterly all the time. Press run: 150 copies. Begun 5 March 1983. 6th issue. All rites reversed.

*****

Welcome to the May 1983 issue of FACTSHEET FIVE, which seems to be growing into a real fanzine, with guest writers and a schedule and everything. Right off the bat, let me tell you why this showed up in your mailbox:

( ) You sent stamps
( ) You sent money
( ) We're trading zines
( ) You're in an apa with me
( ) Other:

THE LAST ISSUE YOU'LL GET WITHOUT TAKING ACTION WILL BE:

And that about sums up the ways to ensure you'll get the next issue as well. Subscription rate is hereby announced to be 40 cents in stamps or 50 cents in money per issue, please do not subscribe for more than four issues at one time. I don't even pretend to know how long I'll be putting this out, nor will I pledge myself to refund unused money. Anything over $1.60 stamps or $2.00 cash will be considered a contribution to the production of FF.

Don't get the idea that I'm discouraging contributions, though. I'm still far from making any money on this, and any help is welcome. Even canned goods (Hi, Anne). You can also get FF by trading your zine for mine, or by sending me a zine for review that I haven't seen before.

Which brings up another point: I welcome hints on where to write for bizarre stuff resembling that contained in this zine. If your hint is valuable enough, I may even throw in a free issue or two. Aren't I generous?

To bring this page to a close, let me remind you all that I'm still looking for guest writers, subjects not limited to reviews. Details on request.

See you again in August, I hope.

Mike

LESS NEWSPOEMS and QUESTIONABLE CARTOONS (69 cents each from Tuli Kupferberg c/o Vanity Press, 160 Sixth Ave., New York, NY 10013). These publications are apparently a spinoff of the Revolting Theatre, which performs what it calls "Radical Vaudeville". The cartoons and poems are generally comments on current news ranging from sarcastic to sardonic. Most seem to be aimed at people with a bit more social consciousness than I have, I'm afraid.

*****

"My bathroom light switch is on the inside & I live in the East. Maybe it's the age of the building that counts." Yes, perhaps it is--this topic generated more mail than anything else I've said in the Factsheet.

*****

ANTI-SOCIAL COMICS #1 ($2 from Tom Roberts, 1270 West Ardmore Ave., Chicago, IL, 60660). I don't read a lot of "underground" comic books, but every so often I run across one. Somehow they all seem the same. Anyhow, if you want to see some gratutitous violence & sex, and read about how video games are destroying the country, you might want to get a copy of this. Otherwise, don't bother.

*****

"We live in the Midwest and have two bathrooms. The light switch is outside of the easternmost one and inside the one that is further to the west. I always assumed this was due to incompetence on the part of the people who installed the bathrooms. I didn't know it was part of a national pattern."

Well, maybe it's a national pattern--or could it be a <u>conspiracy</u>?

*****

SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN has been running, starting with the February issue, a series of columns by Douglas Hofstadter about the computer language LISP. If you are at all interested in computers, it is quite fascinating. Hofstadter does a better job of explaining how LISP works than any textbook on the subject that I've seen.

*****

"SRAF is far too much into equality (which I see they list ahead of voluntarism) for me to be interested in them, but I wish them luck, as I believe that all nonviolent enemies of the State are essentially on the same side."

*****

THE DILLINGER RELIC (available by editorial whim only from Arthur D. Hlavaty, 819 W. Markham Ave., Durham, NC, 27701). Once upon a time there was a fanzine called THE DIAGONAL RELATIONSHIP written by Arthur Hlavaty. The writing was good enough to get him nominated for a Hugo, and the publishing was burdensome enough for him to stop doing so after 20 issues. Now it can be told that the zine went underground, taking on a new name and format but keeping Arthur's writing. The new DR is published in the form of a diary rather than as essays, but the daily entries are often mini-essays in their own right. Arthur talks about fandom and football, sex and science fiction alike, with his usual delightful style. Recommended.

"At least you have a lightswitch. We have a pull-chain." Well, yes, but at the moment my lightswitch doesn't turn on anything, since the wiring has gone bad. Still, bathing by candlelight is sort of fun.

*****

RHUBARB #3 ($1 from Anne Bernstein, 1038 Park Avenue, Hoboken, NJ, 07030) continues to grope for a definition of 'radical humor'. The letter column remains the liveliest part of this fanzine, with responses from those who think they know what it is and from those who think it doesn't exist. There's also an excellent review column that covers a lot of things I don't get, and a sudden upsurge of Discordian infiltration.

*****

THE LAST INTERNATIONAL (2000 Center St. #1314, Berkeley CA, 94704) sends another mixed bag of goodies. My favorite this time around is the review of the San Francisco-based Processed World magazine, which I have never seen a copy of. This review is in the best L.I. satirical tone and heaps scathing scorn on these activists in office-worker clothing. I don't know where the right in this debate is, but it's fun to read about. Available for SASE, I think.

*****

Two phone services in San Fran that have been recommended to me, though I haven't had the money to try them out:

DIAL-AN-EXCUSE, (415)-843-7439 (3PM-3AM, PDT)
DIAL-A-RUMOR, (415)-843-7474

*****

INSIDE JOKE ($1 from Elayne Wechsler, 418 East Third Ave., Roselle, NJ, 07203) seems to be moving in a slightly different direction lately. The humor is getting more deranged and less medioid, with Hunter Thompson fans and the like popping up from the woodowrk. Elayne has been hopelessly corrupted by the Discordians, and it's starting to show. This zine, with its 24 pages of reduced print, remains one of the finest bargains around. Write for a copy now.

*****

OVERTHROW ($10/year from YIP?OVERTHROW, P.O. Box 392, Canal St. Station, New York, NY, 10013) is the newspaper of the Yippies, a still-existant relic of the Sixties. A 40-page newspaper of subversive intent, there's something here for just about everyone, from straight news on the Raygun administration to outright satire. If you're interested in a unique perspective on the No Nukes campaign, draft resistance or just tips on growing dope, you should get a copy of this. One warning: they're very disorganized and slow to send out first issues, so you'll have to be patient.

*****

TRINARY 2 ($1.50 from Eric Morrison, 548 Edward St., Johnstown, PA, 15905) is another fanzine done by someone just finding out about fandom. Thus, the direction is a bit different from the normal fanzine: in particular fan fiction is highly emphasized. Most of the fiction is about on the level one would expect from high school students, but some of it shows promise. Perhaps of interest to other budding writers.

*****

"Thanks for letting us see your story, but we have to say 'no'. This one is tedious, because it is pure revelation-of-wonders, and nothing more. Learn story structure."

Oh,well.

"Am glad to see that you have some school aspirations left. I plan to return to classes full time when I retire. I think higher education is best left for old age, when I've paid for my life"

Ah, but whoever said I intended to leave school before old age?

*****

LITTLE FREE PRESS (Box 8201, Minneapolis, MN, 55408) has moved again but is still putting out bizarre pamphlets plugging the free system. If you're in the mood for a sort of modern-day Utopian idea, send an SASE and ask for the "Brave and Beautiful Future" pamphlet. It's a fun ideas to consider, even if it is a bit impractical.

*****

"How come you didn't rave about the portrayal of Nestor Makhno in The Steel Tsar? He should have been the central character, not Bastable, to be sure. And then there's Una Persson! In the immortal words of Jeff Grimshaw, hubba hubba!"

Well, I didn't rave about the portrayal of Makhno because interesting anarchist characters don't save a poorly-written work of fiction for me. If I must get political education from popular books, I'd rather the surrounding pill was a bit more tasty.

*****

THE SMART SET ($6 for 10 issues from NLE, Box 1748, Long Beach, CA, 90801-1748) is a small zine covering upcoming libertarian meetings around the country (chiefly in southern California and in New York). It also contains a fair amount of libertarian/anarchist oriented advertising, with "Counter-Classifieds" available for 10 cents a word. A cheap way to keep up with the movement.

*****

id ntity (Box 382 CR, Baltimore, MD, 21203) has a xerox of a Baltimore Sun article on a sort of nouveau-art happening in an abandoned railroad tunnel. Cryptic but interesting attempt to achieve fame.

*****

MAGAZINE ($1 from Julian Ross, 1400 N. Hayworth Ave. #36, West Hollywood, CA, 90046) consists of 8 pages of scribbled drawings and no text. Not only can my dog draw better than this, but I can draw better than this. I didn't pay for this and don't recommend you do so either.

*****

THE FIRST ARACHNID CHURCH (P.O. Box 456, Minneapolis, MN, 55440) will be more than happy to tell you about the Great Spider and the way he runs all of creation. The introductory pamphlet is, I think, available for an SASE.

*****

LOS ANGELES LEFT LIBERTARIAN LOCAL (4L) (30 cents from MLL, Box 1748, Long Beach, CA, 90801-1748) is a calendar of events in the L.A. area for Left Libertarians. Left libertarian is defined as one who (a) opposes the State and (b) refuses to participate within its system. If that defines you, write for a copy.

*****

EMANCIPATION #44 ($5/year from AAA, Box 840, Washington, D.C., 20044) is the newsletter of the Anarchist Association of the Americas, a loosely organized coalition of various anarchist groups. This issue is better than the previous several. It contains an excellent article on the "punk" misuse of the term "anarchist".

THE PSYCHOZOIC PRESS, Spring 1983 ($2 from 2121 Braley Rd., Coos Bay, OR, 97420) is a quarterly "Informational Advisory and Communication Exchange Paper on Psychedelics", according to the cover. In other words, a magazine for us druggies. $2 is a bargain price for 76 8½x5½ pages of lore about things from morning glory seeds to San Pedro cactus. A lot of it is devoted to the question of whether drugs are sacramental (which I consider a ridiculous legal ploy), but there is a smattering of other stuff, including chemical analyses and "transcendental trivia", archetypal hippie sayings. Recommended, until they get busted by the DEA.

*****

NONVIOLENT ANARCHIST NEWSLETTER #1 ($3/3 issues from Nonviolent Anarchist Network, Box 1385, Austin, TX, 78767) is another new publication for anarchists, trying to set up a network of those who believe non-violence is the only way to do things. This issue contains articles about Gandhi, the Yippies, and anti-klan rallies, among other things. It looks like this could develop into an interesting bunch of folks.

*****

YOUNG WORKER, Feb. 1983 ($2/year from 235 W. 23rd St., New York, NY, 10011): It's interesting to note that an organization which boasts of great success in recruiting half a dozen people in Newark can afford to sell subscriptions to a twelve-page tabloid for less than the cost of postage. This paper is pure dogmatism. I am slightly amused to note that they are concentrating on minority youth despite the RCP being chased out of the L.A. barrios--but not amused enough to bother picking up a second copy.

*****

THE GUARDIAN ($4/3 month trial sub. from 33 W. 17th St., New York, NY 10011) is an "independent radical newsweekly". In this case "radical" mostly means "socialist", but they cover liberation movements of all types--not only national, but feminist, homosexual, minority and other movements. The news reportage is generally fair, though slanted in a different direction from the Establishment press. Though I'm not very happy with their uncritical support for everyone in the world with a birck to throw, I do value the viewpoints to be found here. They've just switched to a new, more professional format and are worth investigating.

*****

SALT AND PEPPER ($9/year from Sunspot, 5 Lake St., Arlington, MA 02174): Even though this is labelled as "Issue 102" I suspect it's really the first one. This is another magazine of humorous prose, poetry, photos and cartoons (mostly the latter) that's trying to look professional: a slick cover and nice offset pages. I'd have to give it an A on production and a D+ on content, but it's just possible that the contents will go up in quality, so I'll keep an eye out for the next issue & try to let you know.

*****

My thanks to Arthur Hlavaty & Filthy Pierre for leads on where to find South of the Moon. No luck yet, but I'm still looking.

*****

THE READER'S LEAGUE CATALOG OF CORRESPONDENCE #1 ($1 from Stephen Sikora, P. O. Box 6218, Albany, CA, 94706): While I'm trying to promote the idea of an electronic apa, someone else has run across fanzines and wants to promote letter-writing instead. To each his own, and all that. This little magazine consists mostly of ads, somewhat resembling the personals in new-wave newspapers, but all dedicated to one thing: finding new people to write to. An interesting idea, and one I support: apas get wearing after a while, and personal letters can provide much-needed change of pace. It's just starting out, but if this idea takes off, it could be a lot of fun.

*****

"I'm going to try staying sober for the next five days, just to enter that strange reality."

*****

THE CHILDREN'S MUSEUM (Museum Wharf, Boston): No, you can't get a copy of this for an SASE. However, if you're ever stuck in this burg, I recommend you drop by--at least if you, like me, have never grown up. There's about a million pieces of Lego to play with, bunny rabbits to pet, funhouse mirros and flying golfballs--but the funnest thing to watch is all the (other) children. Beats the hell out of the "Tea Party" ship just down the wharf.

*****

SAINT PRIAPUS CHURCH MARCH NEWSLETTER (583 Grove St., San Francisco, CA, 94102): This comes to you from a group dedicated to the creed that "unfilled sexual desires, which Jesus called lust, causes hate, anger, greed and envy; that these sins cause war, crime, violence, unhappiness, and disease; and that sex can destroy evil." They claim to base this on a sect which has been around Southern Italy for centuries, but have a real sense of humour about their calling. Rather thoroughly sexist, but otherwise interesting. They're running a gay rescue mission & other projects in San Francisco and so request a donation, but will send one copy of their newsletter for free.

*****

Elayne Wechsler has won the second FF contest, by identifying the book which is dedicated "To Bob Geiger, for reasons that need not be explained here--and to Bob Dylan, for Mister Tambourine Man." The book is, of course, Hunter Thompson's FEAR AND LOATHING IN LAS VEGAS. For this stunt, Elayne wins a free lifetime subscription to FACTSHEET FIVE (The lifetime of the publication, that is) and an invitation to the next BBBTLE Gala Thanksgiving Dinner, which may be as early as this November. Aren't you jealous? (Well, you should be.)

Which brings us to the third FF Contest: What utopian novel begins with the words: "I first saw the light in the city of Boston in the year 1857"? (It's only fair that this contest be biased towards literate types, just as the last one was biased towards druggies). Prizes to be announced.

*****

Xeroxing of FACTSHEET FIVE by the good offices of Yalda Bahut, Child of Chaos.

Hot dog buns are the wrong shape on this coast.

*****

"Thanks for the wonderful copy of FACTSHEET FIVE. I was somwhat alarmed to see my name therein, but the fear is mostly gone now and anyway I'm probably already under surveillance."
--A Friend

*****

LIVING FREE ($7/6 issues or trade from Jim Stumm, Box 29, Hiler Branch, Buffalo, NY, 14223): "A personal journal of self liberation". This is a magazine for retreatists or homesteaders or whatever you call them--survivalists without raging paranoia. This issue contains articles on cheap food sources, cheap land, getting supplies in, how to make your own toys, and quite a bit of other stuff packed into 10 pages. Recommended for anyone who likes to putter around and make things, or who wants to chuck it all and live in a cabin.

*****

THE FAMILIST Vol. 2 #2 (Free from The Familist Movement, 5324 Sun Valley Drive, El Paso, TX, 79924): "Voice of the Familist Movement", previously known as Libertarian Parents for Children's Rights. This group sees the Family as being the grouping needed to replace the State, and is heavily into the idea of Natural Moral Law. I have trouble taking this sort of thing seriously, but maybe it's just what someone else is looking for. Enjoyable to read, but it strikes me as fiction rather than fact.

*****

CLAUSTROPHOBIA 75 ($15/year, 5047 SW 26th Dr., Portland, OR, 97201): This is the first issue of a new format. The magazine used to consist of various publications such as the L-5 news and the SIL newsletter all bound together and shipped at a discount. Now it's made up of news condensed from the other publications plus some original titles. The subscription price has been cut in half, and the pages have been cut by a factor of 4. Not so much a bargain as it used to be, unless you're interested quite a bit in "life-extension" news. I'll probably subscribe to the SIL newsletter instead.

*****

TOO TWISTED TALES ($1 (I guess) from Toof Arg On Comic Works, 1232 Downing st., Winnipeg, Manitoba R3E 2R7 CANADA) is another one of them thar "underground" comic books. The artwork in this one is better than most I've seen, though all black-and-white. You can get a catalog of other books from the same place for 50 cents. Interesting for the Illuminati in-jokes.

*****

CIRCLE Ⓐ IN ATLANTA #4 (who knows how much from RAAG, 1261 LaVista Rd. NE Apt. G-3, Atlanta, GA 30324): This issue consists mostly of reprints from various other anarchist publications on the topic of the Litton Bombing (in Canada, allegedly by a bunch of anarchists). I find the debate to be essentially pointless; though the communiques about the action come from a group with an anarchist name, I don't see anywhere that they claim to be anarchists. They're probably not even reading the morass of stuff being written about them. Would that I could say the same. This issue also contains articles on Norman Mayer (the guy who threatened to blow up the Washington Monument) and Sex and Revolution (which was not as interesting as it sounds). All in all, mediocre.

THIS HOUSE 14 ($1 from John Purcell, 3381 Sumter Ave. South, St. Louis Park, MN, 55426 or Matthew B. Tepper, 125 Oak Grove #41, Minneapolis, MN, 55403 or send trade copies to both editors): THIS HOUSE used to be John Purcell's fanzine before he gafiated (for you non-fans, that means "before he got tired of the whole business"). Now it's starting up again, with an infusion of fresh blood from Matthew. This issue is much like I dimly remember the previous ones to have been. The writing is pleasant, the humor is funny, the book reviews are thoughtful, and the letter column is lively. Even better, the production is such that one can read it without eyestrain (though who am I to talk?). This one looks promising.

*****

THE DAILY WORLD (trial subscription $1/month from P.O. Box 544, Old Chelsea Station, New York, NY, 10011): This is THE DAILY WORKER in its new incarnation. A surprisingly mild tabloid for a journal from a group supposedly dedicated to overthrowing the government and all that. Looks like the Reds are still most interested in getting the Unions on their side, at least to judge from the amount of space devoted to labor-related stories. No more biased (or interesting) than the Boston HERALD AMERICAN. Perhaps worth reading if you can find it for free like I did.

*****

For those of you concerned with Native American affairs, letters of support and assistance for Dennis Banks (currently wanted in South Dakota on what many maintain are false charges) may be sent to him c/o Onondaga Nation, Nedrow, NY, 13120.

*****

COUNTERSPUD #8 (FREE from Data Day Communications, Box 251, Philadelphia, PA, 19105): Stale conspiracy theory implicationg the Federal Reserve, Trilateral Commision, and CFR in something-or-other nefarious, Zippy the Pinhead and Baboon Dooley comics, and SubGenius propaganda make up the bulk of this zine--but what the hell, the price is right.

*****

WHOLE LIFE TIMES ($11.95/year from 18 Sheoard St., Brighton, MA, 02135): Another good example of the unintentional humor that pervades our culture--or of my warped sense of humor, depending on how you look at it. To glance through the advertisements is to see Acupuncturing Dentists, Cosmic Insights, All-Natural Diapers, Brewer's Yeast, Contraptions for Hanging Head Down, and much more, including a hundred and one different Schools of Enlightenment (most charging hefty fees. As far as I can tell, the articles contain useful information on how to preserve your health amid the modern world. For those of you interested in this sort of thing, they print this list of other such publications:

Whole Life Times New York
80 Fifth Ave., New York, NY
(212) 741-7274

Whole Life Times LA
P.O. Box 3579, Santa Monica, CA 90403
(213) 459-3821

Common Ground
1300 Sanchez St., San Francisco, CA 94131
(415) 647-1776

Common Ground Hawaii
217 S. King St., #308
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

The Aquarian Directory Of New Mexico
PO Box 4009, Albuquerque, NM 87106

Holistic Networking News
P.O. Box 18103 Phoenix, AR 85060
Newsletter P.O. Box 1076, Boulder CO 80306

New Age Chicago
2930 N. Lincoln, Chicago, IL 60657 (312) 348-8578

New Texas
P.O. Box 18032, Austin TX 78760 (512) 476-3131

New Age Resources
4422 Alabama St. San Diego, CA 92116

New Life Now
P.O. Box 355, Athens, Maine 04912
(207) 654-2636

Pathways
1033 31st St., N.W. Washington DC 20007
(202) 338-7875

PhenomeNEWS (For Detroit Area)
1735 South Main, Suite 7
Pleasant Ridge, MI 48069

The Science/Vanilla Press
240 Colfax Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN
(612) 374-4726

Zhivio
PO Box 583
Frankston, Victoria 3199 Australia

The New Frontier
217 Church St. Philadelphia PA 19106
(609) 783-6025

STARS ON ONE

by Anni Ackner

To be perfectly honest with you right from the start--and Perfect Honesty, I'm afraid, is an inescapable by-product of being the sort of freelance commentator, raconteur and smart-ass about town who never receives press passes to anything--while this is a lovely little column and I am, of course, very pleased to have it, I am just the tiniest bit puzzled as to why it was given to me. I mean, if you're going to have a visual arts critic anyway--and you might as well: everyone else has got one--there are lots of Real Reviewers out there who could do a much more credible job than I. I don't say that out of any undue modesty, mind you, but only from a strongly ingrained sense of my own capabilities. I know, for instance, that I write absolutely spiffy bits of cultural humour, that no one touches my Ravi Shankar imitation (possibly because of the difficulty in finding 10 foot poles in this depleted market), that I am the only person I know who has read the complete works of Anais Nin without developing an irresistable desire to punch a poet in the belly, and that I make a dynamite coffee cake, but I also know, painful as it is for me to admit it, that I do not now, nor have I ever understood Visual Media. I do not understand television. I do not understand rock videos. I do not understand comic books and, more than anything else in the world, I do not understand movies.

Oh, I guess I understand the plots all right, notwithstanding the fact that I sat all the way through ERASERHEAD three times before someone finally explained to me that it was supposed to be funny, and I more or less understand the concept of Film as Art Form, even though I still confuse Rainer Fassbinder with Wim Wenders, and I even have a grip, after much of the kind of contemplation I routinely indulge in at four in the morning when even MTV has failed to lull me to sleep, on why everybody but me thinks Burt Reynolds is sexier than Dustin Hoffman. What I do not understand is Movies and How They Get That Way or Why Do They Do Them Like They Do Do Do, a variation, I suppose, on the theme of Four Complaints in Three Acts.

I don't understand, to give you an example, what on earth happened to LOVESICK, which really should have been a nice, mildly sophisticated bit of fluff, good for a Saturday Night at the Movies with someone you don't know very well, and instead ended up all in a mush. That is to say, it's got Dudley Moore as an urbane psychiatrist who gives it all up when he falls in love with one of his patients, and he's terribly cute and cuddly and comedic, as he always is, and Alec Guiness, as the Spirit of Sigmund Freud, who swims in and out of Dudley's stream of consciousness at odd moments, and who must be admired for being capable of playing everyone from Adolph Hitler to Obi-Wan Kenobi using exactly the same vocal inflections, and it's shot in New York, which is always a plus, so why, I wonder, did Those Who Are In Charge of These Things, take all these dandy elements and send them all to hell with a sloppy script, otherwise silly casting (Elizabeth McGovern, last seen lurking about RAGTIME, plays the object of Dudley's affections, and looks rather less like

someone who'd cause a supposedly intelligent male to want to leave his wife than one of those smile-faced balloons they sell on Eigth Street), and the sort of rapid-fire pacing that always makes me feel as though I'm being hit on the back of the head with a teaspoon? I know they must have had reasons, good reasons, but I just don't understand what they were.

The there's WITHOUT A TRACE. What was done unto WITHOUT A TRACE should not have been done unto a dog. For the first 110 minutes, WITHOUT A TRACE is a perfectly good, tight, mature suspense drama, one of those perfectly good, tight, mature suspense dramas that can get you so engrossed that you forget you're seeing it in a duplex theatre made by taking one theater of a reasonable size and building a wall down its middle, thus creating two theatres wi th the relative space and comfort of a third world voting booth, next door to a showing of I CHEW ON YOUR LEG attended by that breed of adolescent who apparently use a trip to the movies to practice up for the next REO Speedwagon concert. For the last 10 minutes, WITHOUT A TRACE is what is known about my house as a Stinkeroo. It does puzzle me. I mean, here you have a good story--loosely based on the still unsolved case of Etan Patz, a little boy who disappeared from his street in Soho several years ago--a few really hotshot actors (notably Judd Hirsch as the detective assigned to the case and Stockard Channing as a supportive friend of the missing boy's mother), colossal direction, all those things that less fortunate film makers dream about as they lie sleeping in their beds, and then you just kick back and stick the sort of ending that would make Shirley Temple blush on it? I don't know--something just strikes me as a bit off there, but I don't know what. Presumably, the same writer/s who did the first 110 minutes of the movie is/are responsible for the last 10, and I do wonder what caused the sudden change. Did the supply of cocaine suddenly dry up or suddenly start coming in? Did he/she/they decide this thus-far endless story needed a happy ending to cheer us all up, or is this the Famous Cosmic Goof, about which I've heard so much?

No doubt a Real Reviewer--one of those people who, given the choice, would seriously rather see MOSCOW DOES NOT BELIEVE IN TEARS than SUPERMAN II--could explain all this to you but, as I sais, I just don't have it in me. It's embarassing, but it's true, and I admit it all in the name of Perfect Honesty.

You don't think they'll take away my membership in the Rex Reed Fan Club, do you?

*****

Gunderloy here--As a minor way of adressing the questions which Anni raises at the start of her column, let me point out that not only can I not tell Rainer Fassbinder from Wim Wenders, but that I have absolutely no idea who either one of them is. My idea of a recent movie (and a great one, to boot) is WHERE THE BUFFALO ROAM. In general, what I am trying to point out is that in order to be a Visual Arts Critic one should at least have some nodding acquaintance and passing interest in the visual media, a qualification which Anni fullfils much better than I ever could. Welcome aboard, Anni.

CAN DOUBT BE DENIED?

Doubt is the keystone of knowledge. I know that sounds suspiciously like a quote from Orwell's 1984, but I think it is substantially true. If one knows something which he will not, cannot, or dare not doubt, I would say that the fact in question is not knowledge but faith. Faith may be comforting, but a system which rests on faith can hardly claim to derive knowledge from concrete facts, be the system scientific or religious in nature.

Unfortunately for this sort of definition, all systems of knowledge which I am acquainted with (including mainstream Establishment science) are based on first principles established by faith. Though the scientific method was a revolutionary way of looking at the world, it cannot produce something from nothing--that it, it cannot find pure knowledge amid the factless primal chaos. Science starts with faith in the form of axioms and postulates, and changing the shape of this faith changes the science, as in the overworked example of Non-Euclidean geometries. Beyond this, all concrete sciences have implicit in them faith in ideas that the Universe is not a capricious place, that matter does not become nothing without a reason, and so on.

Can any system then be based on knowledge rather than faith? I doubt it. I can see no source whatsoever for a fact on which to build a system that is not just an element of faith. Neither God or our senses can point to a single ur-fact standing pristine in the Universe. All knowledge would seem to be contingent on the system from whcih it was derived, and there seems no particular reason why one system should be "truer" (if that word has any meaning) than another.

Here I tumble off into a true morass of uncertainty. Rene Descartes started in on a similar program of systematic doubt, until he was left with the famous "Cogito, ergo sum", affirming that the doubter, at least, had to exist. On this foundation he built his entire system.

But why not take that last, obvious step, and doubt even my own existence? It seems to me that I have no way of knowing that I am not a computer program, or the dream of some real being, or a mass hallucination of my parents and peers, or any other insubstantial sort of figment. There seems to be a doubter, but perhaps this is only an illusion. This is worse than solipsism, and I can see no way out other than a certain blind faith in my own existence and that of the world. This is unsettling to one who has been brought up to believe that Science and its method will provide answers.

I suppose that having reached this point I should start to build up a new way of looking at the world. This is a supremely arrogant sort of thing to do, normally reserved for famous Teutonic philosophers and the like. Perhaps I am ripe for a revelation, from whatever Source there is out there.

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Staph:

Founderer Emiritus: St. Michael D. Miller, retd.
Spiritual Guidance: St. Stephen Xavier of Trever
Visual Arts Critic: Anni Ackner
Everything Else: Mike Gunderloy

BOOKS

RIGHT WHERE YOU ARE SITTING NOW, by Robert Anton Wilson (And/Or Tpb, 1982): The latest set of collected essays from the Grand Master of the Illuminati. Parts of this book were written by stringing random words together. The challenge is to decide which parts they are. In the more lucid sections, Wilson discourses with his usual knowledge and humour about things from parapsychology to God's bumbling. Recommended for Illuminatus! fans only. (★★★½★)

EYE OF CAT, by Roger Zelazny (Timescape hc 1982): The author weaves together a tale of chase and adventure against a background of future technology and traditional Navajo ways. An interesting experiment, though it didn't quite work for me --both backgrounds seemed to be competing for center stage with neither being completely fleshed out. (★★★)

DRUG LAWS AND THE RIGHTS THAT PROTECT YOU, by Kenneth L. Weiss and David J. Kurland (Fireside tpb 1980): A must for anyone who uses, sells, or stores drugs at home, on their person, or in their car. The authors--a pair of lawyers-- take you on a guided tour of applicable rights, along with lots of advice about when to shut up and stay put. If you're going to take chances, doesn't it make sense to be prepared? (★★★★★)

THE ADVENTURERS, by Harold Robbins (Pocket Cardinal pb, 1967): Robbins' usual loveable characters romp all over the world as they plot to take or keep control of a small Central American banana republic. Enjoyable trash. (★★★★)

THE MAN, by Irving Wallace (Bantam pb 1979): Through a series of flukes, the black President pro tempore of the US Senate becomes president, where he promptly lands in hot water by doing what he thinks is right for the country. The suspense over the impeachment trial held me spellbound for 600 pages. Unfortunately, this is a 900-page book. (★½★)

SYNERGETICS: Explorations in the Geometry of thinking, by R. Buckminster Fuller (MacMillan hc, 1975): Bucky has a staggering capability for building up baroque systems starting from a bare minimum of facts. This book starts from the basic ideas of tetrahedral space packing and ends up by explaining everything and nothing. Some thought-provoking sections, but everything is buried amongst a lot of garbage--he seems to have an acid-head's inability to tell the roses from the fertilizer. Pretty pictures. (★★★)

SURVIVAL WORLD, by Frank Belknap Long (Magnum/Prestige pb, 1971): Without a doubt the worst SF book I have read yet this year. Not even camp. (Ø)

I AM A BARBARIAN, by Edgar Rice Burroughs (Ace pb 1967): The story of Caligula's slave Brittanicus, based on the best academic Roman history that Burroughs could find (which have no doubt been outdated). A fast-moving adventure tale which I enjoyed more than the Tarzan series. (★★★½★)

DISTURBING THE UNIVERSE, by Freeman Dyson (Harper & Roe hc 1979): The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation has been funding autobiographical workds by major scientists, and this is one of the results. Dyson has an interesting style--rambling without being confused. He talks about everything from the ethics of weapons (where he argues that purely defensive weapons are morally OK) to Dyson spheres (which he denies inventing). Well worth reading, if only to show that not all physicists are inherently dull. (★★★★)

THE WIND WHALES OF ISHMAEL, by Philip Jose Farmer (Ace pb 1971): Farmer writes some excellent books and some real turkeys. This one--as "sequel" to MOBY DICK--almost gobbles when you open the covers. Give it a miss unless you're a collector. (★)

THE SPACE MERCHANTS, by Fredrik Pohl and C. M. Kornbluth (Ballantine pb 1972): This must be my month for rereading the classics. Pohl and Kornbluth team up to present a rollicking adventure tale against a background of ad-agency-controlled America. If I had to reduce my collection to fifty books, I'd keep this one. (★★★★★)

SEARCH FOR LIBERATION (Bhaktivedanta pb 1981): "Featuring a conversation between A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRADHUPADA and JOHN LENNON". The Hare Krishnas attempt to cash in on Lennon's death by re-issuing moldy old ISKCON propaganda, including a letter revealing that Lennon was a wealthy Indian musician in his last life. About as much social value as a snuff film. (Ø)

THE ENDLESS TUNNEL, by Howard H. Hilton (Tower pb 1980): Another of the endless parade of disaster books, this one set in the Callahan tunnel underneath Boston Harbor. Wooden characters, unbelieveable plot complications, and a lame ending team up to make this eminently forgettable. Not recommended unless you're from Boston and want to cheer for the stupid tunnel to be destroyed. (★★)

IT'S A MAD, MAD, MAD GALAXY, by Keith Laumer (Berkley pb 1968): Short stories from a competent if not brilliant SF writer. I particularly enjoyed "The Planet Wreckers" and "The War With The Yukks". Both of these explore the happenings when a normal human gets wrapped up in complex extraterrestrial affairs in a humourous way. (★★★ ½★)

WASP, by Eric Frank Russell (Permabooks pb 1959): One man at war against an entire planet, sort of a sci-fi guerilla classic. Alas, this premise has become less believeable over the years with advances in criminology and centralized data-storage. Still a good adventure yarn, though it seems like Russell got tired and rushed the ending rather than continue at a steady pace. (★★★★)

NOT A PENNY MORE, NOT A PENNY LESS, by Jeffrey Archer (Fawcett pb 1976): Four guys get swindled by a master crook and determine to steal their own money back. Not in the least a reasonable plot but suited for relaxation. The printed equivalent of spray cheese. (★★★)

EXECUTIVE ACTION, by Donald Freed and Mark Lane (Dell pb 1973): Another in the long line of books explaining the conspiracy behind the JFK assassination. At least this one admits to being fiction. (★★)

21ST CENTURY SUB, by Frank Herbert (Avon pb 1956): Of some historical interest as an early work by the author of DUNE, but not much of a story. The average paragraph is about two sentences long. Perhaps this is meant to keep the action moving, but it seems to just keep it jerky. Aka SILENT RUNNING and THE DRAGON IN THE SEA. (★★)

MAFIA FIX (THE DESTROYER #4), by Richard Sapir and Warren Murphy (Pinnacle pb 1972): Remo takes on the syndicate over fifty tons of heroin. Some really disgusting sex & violence scenes, but more of a plot than most of these books have. Not for the weak-stomached or feminists. (★★★★)

THE TERRITORIAL IMPERATIVE, by Robert Ardrey (Atheneum hc 1966): The second of the series of books containing Ardrey's ideas on the basic bestiality of the human race. He seems to believe that much of our behaviour is determined by our nasty animal origins, particularly our carnivorous history and sense of territory. I'd be a lot happier if he didn't have so much good evidence to support this position. (AAAA)

COUP D'ETAT, by Edward Luttwak (Harvard University Press hc 1979): The classic in the field, contains instructions on how to tell if your country is ripe for a coup and how to run one if it is. Unfortunately, as the author points out in his new foreward, it's only been established that one set of plotters used this book as a blueprint, and their copy was found after they were all executed. That's life. (AA)

ALTERNATE REALITIES, by Lawrence L. LeShan (M. Evans & Co. hc 1976): The author was trained as a psychologist, and this caused him to notice that his patients did not always seem to be in the same world as he was. This spurred his investigation into realities ranging from modern physics to ancient firewalking. His conclusion: There are many ways of looking at the world, and all are equally valid. Well-written, with footnotes pointing the way to much more research. (AAAAA)

O MASTER CALIBAN!, by Phyllis Gotlieb (Harper & Row hc 1976): A talking gibbon, a four-armed mutant, and a grumpy old goat set out to rescue a bunch of kids from a crashed spaceship while the mad scientist plays chess with the master computer to try and save everyones' lives. Not as bad as it sounds--it's worse. (A)

AND STRANGE AT ECBATAN THE TREES, by Michael Bishop (Harper & Row hc 1976): A novel of man's far future, where the race is confined on a strange planet by a more advanced species that has re-engineered human society for our own good. Low on technology for such a timespan, but very well done portrait of a society. Enjoyable but minor fiction. (AAA)

THE FLIGHT TO LUCIFER: A Gnostic Fantasy, by Harold Bloom (Farar-Straus-Giroux hc 1979): A tightly-written adventure story that makes much use of Gnostic philosophy. Too much use, in fact, as it made the plot totally opaque to me. I'm afraid someone who can tell what's going on will have to say whether this was a good book or not--I liked the style but found it hard to read. (?A)

FUTURE SHOCK, by Alvin Toffler (Bantam pb 1970): A classic of sorts. To me, one of the most interesting things about this book is that all of the wonderful things that were just over the horizon in 1970 are still just over the horizon now. Not that I think society has been stagnating for the past decade: rather, this points up how hard it is to predict innovation. I find Toffler's arguments for using instead of fighting technology to be as valid as ever today. (AAA ½ A)

SEAWITCH, by Alistair MacLean (Fawcett Crest pb 1977): MacLean is getting cranky in his old age and starting to write stories in which even the good guys break the law with gleeful abandon. I preferred the good old days of escapism painted in stark black and white. Nicely convoluted plot. (AA)

THE STARS MY DESTINATION, by Alfred Bester (Signet pb 1957): Bester has his own brand of believeable humor, distinctive societies, and mile-a-minute ideas. This is a classic, and deserves to be. Gully Foyle, interplanetary derelict, goes head-to-head with the powers of the solar system and sparks fly. I just wish Bester could still write like this. (AAAAA)

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